

CITY OF ALAMEDA

Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

From: John A. Russo
City Manager

Date: December 6, 2011

Re: Receive an Operational Update on the Fire Department's Senior Safety and
Commercial Inspection Programs

BACKGROUND

At the July 5, 2011 City Council meeting, the Alameda Fire Department provided an update on the Department's Senior Safety and Commercial Inspection programs. Because these programs were in transition at that time, the City Council requested that the Department provide another update when the programs were operational.

DISCUSSION

Senior Safety Program: The Senior Safety Program was established in 2010 as a community outreach hazard mitigation program for low-income senior citizens. Funding for the program was primarily pieced together with federal grants (Federal Emergency Management Agency and Community Development Block Grant). Smaller grants were provided by Home Depot and the Alameda Community Fund. A majority of funding for the program expired at the end of FY10-11. Over the 18 months the program was in place, it provided home visits to more than 350 seniors. During these home visits, safety plans to mitigate fall and fire hazards were implemented, and smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, night lights, and other safety devices were installed.

Over the last six months, Fire Department staff has been working with staff from the Housing Authority and the Mastick Senior Center, as well as the Boy Scouts, the Kiwanis Club and Alameda Hospital, to strategize the next iteration of the program and discuss funding sources. The Fire Department and its partners have developed an expanded hybrid program that combines support for seniors and the disabled. The new program blends the City's existing Accessibility Modification Program with key elements of the former Senior Safety Program. In addition, the Boy Scouts will make adult-accompanied visits to the homes of those seniors who have already had smoke detectors installed in order to replace batteries in the detectors. Alameda Hospital and Kiwanis Club partners will help with program outreach.

The new program, the Housing Safety and Accessibility Modification Program, assists low-income seniors and persons with disabilities with making minor fire and fall safety

modifications to their homes, as well as accessibility repairs to help individuals attain greater mobility in their homes. Since the original Senior Safety Program was put on hold, more than 20 people have inquired about the program. Interested parties have been notified about the status of the program and will be contacted again soon to receive assistance.

For the remainder of FY11-12, the new program will complete 75 home assessments, including the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and other fire and fall prevention devices. The program will also complete up to 10 accessibility modification projects, which include grants averaging \$2,000 each.

The Housing Authority is investing \$49,895 in CDBG funds, which will be leveraged with \$5,000 in Home Depot grant funds. Together, this funding will cover the salary of a part-time Housing Safety and Accessibility Assistant in the Fire Department, as well as the installation of fire and fall safety devices and small grants for minor accessibility modifications.

After a thorough recruitment and evaluation process involving the Fire Department and the Housing Authority, an Assistant was selected from more than 90 applicants. The Assistant has six years experience with the City of Hayward implementing similar programs, and has been a licensed contractor in the Bay Area for 24 years. The part-time Assistant will be housed in the Fire Department and begins work on November 28, 2011.

Commercial Inspections: The Commercial Inspection Program had been relatively dormant for over two years. According to Fire Prevention records, there are 1260 commercial units in the city. During FY10-11, these inspections were conducted by firefighters assigned to light duty because of injuries that prevented them from performing their regular duties. There were 562 commercial inspections performed, which generated \$31,777 in revenue in FY10-11.

In September 2011, the Fire Department completed training so that those staff assigned to the fire companies, i.e. engines and trucks, can conduct commercial inspections. The Fire Chief sent letters to local business associations describing the program and reiterating the Department's commitment to work collaboratively with the business community. The request was made to have these letters translated into other languages for business owners in need of this service. During October 2011, fire companies began inspecting commercial establishments in the city.

During this initial phase of the program, the Fire Department intends to complete 72 commercial inspections per month. The anticipated revenue generation for FY11-12 from this program is approximately \$56,000. The Fire Department will continue to evaluate the data collected to determine the effectiveness of this program and work with the business owners to seek improvements which enhance the safety of the community.

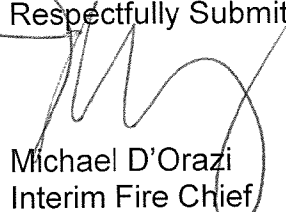
FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Housing Authority and Fire Department entered into an MOU for the use of \$49,895 in CDBG funds for this program for FY11-12. The Commercial Inspection Program is projected to generate \$25,000 of additional revenue in FY11-12 above the amount collected in FY10-11.

RECOMMENDATION

Receive an operational update of the Commercial Inspection and Senior Safety Programs.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael D'Orazi", written over the printed name.

Michael D'Orazi
Interim Fire Chief

Approved as to funds and account,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fred Marsh", written over the printed name.

Fred Marsh
Controller